

May 18, 2009

TO: Jennifer Mason, WFSE

FROM: Teresa Parsons, SPHR  
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Yvonne Chandler v. Seattle Community College District (SCCD)  
Allocation Review Request ALLO-08-071

On March 19, 2009, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference regarding the allocation of Ms. Chandler's position. Present at the Director's review conference were you and Ms. Chandler; Fred Schuneman, Interim Chief Human Resources (HR) Officer; Harrieta Hanson, former HR Operations Manager; and Patricia A. Hutcherson, Ph.D., an outside consultant and former Vice President of Human Resources for South Puget Sound Community College. Dr. Hutcherson conducted Ms. Chandler's position review and issued an allocation determination on behalf of SCCD.

### **Director's Determination**

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to July 14, 2008, the date Ms. Chandler submitted her request for reallocation to SCCD. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Chandler's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position is properly allocated to the Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2 classification.

### **Background**

On July 14, 2008, Ms. Chandler submitted a Position Questionnaire, requesting that her Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2 (HRCA 2) position be reallocated to the Human Resource Consultant 1 classification. SCCD hired an outside consultant, Patricia A. Hutcherson, Ph.D., to perform the review of Ms. Chandler's position. By memo dated September 12, 2008, Dr. Hutcherson determined Ms. Chandler's position was properly allocated to the HRCA 2 classification.

On September 30, 2008, Ms. Chandler requested a Director's review of SCCD's allocation determination.

### **Summary of Ms. Chandler's Perspective**

Ms. Chandler asserts the Position Description, dated December 14, 2007, does not accurately reflect the work assigned to her position. Ms. Chandler asserts that in January 2008, the Human Resources (HR) Department in the College's District Office went through a transition that included changes in staff assignments. At that time, Ms. Chandler contends the HR Chief, Dr. Brent Jones, had encouraged her to do more consulting rather than the data entry or clerical functions related to personnel actions. Ms. Chandler further contends that her previous duties relating to maintaining the PPMS database and administering leave for classified and part-time hourly employees changed. As such, Ms. Chandler states that she was asked to put together a procedural handbook and train others on leave procedures for classified employees, as well as a faculty leave handbook.

Ms. Chandler asserts she acts as a liaison for three campuses and satellite areas and provides assistance and serves as a resource to campus HR Administrators and individual departments. Because of her knowledge and experience regarding leave and other benefits, excluding medical, Ms. Chandler indicates employees and managers will often contact her directly. Ms. Chandler states she refers people to the appropriate laws, rules, district policies or procedures, and collective bargaining agreements. Ms. Chandler points out that she ensures the information provided is consistent with past interpretations or practices. Ms. Chandler notes that she supervises student interns performing clerical support and that she has conducted training on HR issues for new employee orientations. Ms. Chandler indicates her job duties were announced as a new position for an HRC 2 position, and she believes her position should be reallocated.

### **Summary of SCCD's Reasoning**

SCCD asserts that prior to the HR reorganization the duties performed by individual employees were more task oriented. Accordingly, SCCD states that Ms. Chandler's primary duties and responsibilities related to leave and benefits. Within that area, SCCD contends Ms. Chandler had the responsibility of responding to inquiries, resolving problems, performing data entry in PPMS and handling leave records for the district colleges. SCCD acknowledges Ms. Chandler has a lot of knowledge and experience working with leave. As part of the transition, SCCD explains that all of the paraprofessional positions, like Ms. Chandler's, cross-trained other positions in their specific areas. SCCD asserts the HR Department's goal was to assign and perform broader tasks across the district. SCCD states that Ms. Chandler's examples of updating and documenting leave procedures and handbooks were part of the efforts to cross-train other HR employees. With regard to consultation, SCCD contends the practice has been to refer questions back to the appropriate campus HR Administrator for consultation. SCCD states that Ms. Chandler's position primarily handles questions relating to process, verification of records, or information relating to human resource rules, policies, regulations, and/or procedures. SCCD acknowledges Dr. Jones's intent to enhance professional growth for paraprofessional positions. However, SCCD maintains that the majority of duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Chandler's position remain at the paraprofessional HRCA 2 level.

### **Rationale for Director's Determination**

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

I considered Ms. Chandler's Job Description (Exhibit A-2) in conjunction with the Position Questionnaire (PQ) (Exhibit A-4), as well as the comments provided by all parties. Harrietta Hanson was the HR Manager and Ms. Chandler's supervisor at the time of her reallocation request. Although Ms. Hanson did not complete the management portion of PQ, she participated in the Director's review conference and provided clarification about the reorganization and Ms. Chandler's assignment of work during the time relevant to this review. Prior to becoming the HR Manager, Ms. Hanson was Dr. Jones's Executive Assistant.

The Position Summary for Ms. Chandler's position indicates she performs a variety of paraprofessional and technical duties in one or more human resource areas and assists professional level human resources administrative staff and management. Ms. Chandler works independently under general supervision and interprets, explains, and applies institutional and human resource rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. Prior to the organizational transition, Ms. Chandler handled the paraprofessional tasks for all types of leave for the district colleges. During the transition, Ms. Chandler continued to administer leave but she was assigned to handle leave and other paraprofessional duties for a specific group of employees—the classified employees. Other positions within HR were then assigned other employee groups, such as exempt or faculty. Because Ms. Chandler had previously handled leave for all groups, she cross-trained her co-workers for assigned groups such as part-time faculty. Ms. Hanson explained that all employees at that time were cross-training on the specific duties previously assigned to their positions. Ms. Hanson also indicated that the projects assigned to Ms. Chandler by Dr. Jones related to this cross-training effort. For example, Ms. Chandler indicated that Dr. Jones asked her to create procedures manuals. Fred Schuneman, Interim Chief HR Officer, affirmed that Ms. Chandler's procedures manuals documented the step by step process for many of the functions previously assigned to her position.

On Part I of the PQ, Ms. Chandler describes the major duties assigned to her position. The following is a summary of the duties described by Ms. Chandler (Exhibit A-4):

30% Review, process, research, correct, revise and maintain a wide variety of personnel actions. Ms. Chandler states she also recommends and supports HR Administrators, supervisors, payroll and campus business offices.

- New hire paperwork;

- Salary/rate, including monthly periodic increments;
- Cost of living increases;
- Adjustment of salary based on DOP survey
- Revise classification and salary in HRIS database;
- Leave of absence;
- Adjustment of service date/seniority date;
- Transfer/promotions; retirement/termination;
- Support in interpreting the classified collective bargaining agreement;
- Special projects entailing research of other state and higher education institutions.

30% Lead resource for training, administering, processing and maintaining leave benefit reports and records for faculty, exempt, and classified employees. Supervise student Work-Study and Intern employees.

- Calculate shared leave and provide yearly report;
- Bereavement leave;
- Adjustment of service date;
- Annual sick leave buy back
- VEBA;
- Provide leave training to co-workers and for various projects;
- Generate yearly liability report and check for accuracy;
- Train students; submit evaluations for student's job performance; assign job duties to students.

20% Conduct training for all employee types on HR issues at individual campuses, one on one, and at monthly New Employee Orientation. Proactively provide information and interpretation to customers regarding human resources, collective bargaining, personnel process, procedures, rules, and policies for all types of employees as it relates to leave benefits.

- Classified professional development;
- Leave benefits;
- Employee benefits other than medical/dental/retirement (i.e. Tuition Waivers);
- Classified evaluations;
- Employee Assistance Program;
- Transportation (TMP).

20% Prepare personnel action forms: transfers, terminations, retirement and other personnel/payroll data for changes for all employee types.

- Maximum leave balance;
- Shared leave including spreadsheets/database;
- Verification of employment form and leave transfer to other WA State employers.

During the Director's review conference, both Ms. Chandler and Ms. Hanson provided clarification about the duties describe above. Ms. Chandler indicated that the assistance or recommendations she provides to HR Administrators, supervisors, and departments involves providing resources; referencing a CBA agreement, rule, or policy; and explaining past practices or procedures. The research she performs involves looking at past practices and ensuring standard procedures are consistent throughout the district. Ms. Chandler may also explain the technical aspects of leave reporting or other functions, such as calculating service credit or processing a personnel action. Ms. Chandler agreed that the HR Administrator for each respective campus will generally advise and consult with campus supervisors and departments, and she indicated she will typically find out what information has already been given before responding to an inquiry. Ms. Hanson reiterated that inquires requiring consultation or advice should be directed to the appropriate HR Administrator.

In reviewing the above duties and the context with which Ms. Chandler performs those duties, the majority of work is paraprofessional and technical in nature. While Ms. Chandler may provide a general overview of a particular subject, such as VEBA, she also provides resources for the individual requesting assistance and/or procedural information. The training she provides primarily relates to process, though she may reference specific rules, polices, or articles of a collective bargaining agreement. During the Director's review conference, Ms. Hanson clarified that the way the technology is structured, the processing of employee leave benefits is recognized as a shared function between HR and Payroll. Leave is reported within the individual departments with copies sent to HR. In Ms. Chandler's case, she handles leave for classified employees. She performs the data entry and reporting for her assigned group. The PQ also indicates that Ms. Chandler supervises student workers who perform tasks like data entry, leave calculations, or filing. As a new duty, Ms. Hanson indicated Ms. Chandler assumed the existing process for administering classified professional leave. Ms. Hanson explained that the administration of such leave involves processing the leave application, ensuring all necessary documents are included, obtaining the Chief's signature, and generating paperwork for reimbursement.

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations. While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification.

The **Class Series Concept** for Human resource professionals and paraprofessionals includes the following (Exhibit D):

*Human resource professionals are involved in assignments that frequently crossover or merge traditional functions and specialties. . . .*

*The Human Resource Consultant is a professional series with a Human Resource Consultant Assistant 1 and 2 as the paraprofessional levels. Positions*

*in this series may require specialization in one or a limited number of human resource areas or may be assigned a wide variety of responsibilities.*

*Examples of professional responsibilities typically assigned include, but are not limited to: classification, compensation, recruitment, selection, affirmative action, diversity, staff and leadership development and training, career counseling, employee recognition and motivation, advising management on corrective and disciplinary actions, representing an organization in appeals or grievances, conducting labor negotiations, mediation or arbitration, organizational analysis or development, interpretation and application of laws, rules, policies and procedures, and other personnel services. Positions may also be assigned workplace safety or security issues, loss control analysis or prevention, program or policy development, quality consultation, or other functions relating to human resource management in an organization.*

*Examples of paraprofessional or technical responsibilities typically assigned include, but are not limited to: interpreting rules and policies to direct payroll actions, explaining human resource policies, procedures, and programs to employees, managers, the public, and others; providing technical assistance to support the professional responsibilities listed above; providing guidance to others in registering or applying for human resource programs, completing requests for personnel actions, benefits, etc.; providing training or orientation in area of responsibility; maintaining confidential records and generating reports.*

The **Human Resource Consultant 1** definition reads as follows:

*Performs first-level professional human resource assignments in one or more areas of the human resource function such as classification, compensation, benefits, recruitment and selection, affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, reasonable accommodation, training, organizational development, and/or labor relations.*

The Human Resource Consultant 1 distinguishing characteristics are described as follows:

*Under general supervision, performs first-level professional human resource assignments. Works under the regular guidance of a higher level human resource professional or manager. Supervisor typically reviews work in progress as well as outcomes and assists with work prioritization. Positions work independently in making decisions regarding work processes or methods which will be used. Assignments are typically reoccurring, of limited scope, and/or involve a portion of a project. Assignments require analysis of a variety of policies and rules and development of strategies to resolve problems consistent with established standards.*

While Ms. Chandler performs some level of consultation and guidance, it primarily pertains to process. Ms. Chandler's position is tasked with providing resources and information

about standards and past practices, as well as human resource rules, policies, regulations or procedures. The scope of her human resource related work is best described by the paraprofessional or technical level as described in the class series concept.

The **Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2** definition describes the position as performing "a variety of paraprofessional and technical duties in one or more human resource areas providing support to management and staff."

The Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2 distinguishing characteristics are described as follows:

*Assistant to professional level human resource staff and management. Works independently under general supervision and within established guidelines. Applies specialized knowledge and uses independent judgment in resolving technical and paraprofessional problems and interpreting and applying human resource rules, policies, regulations or procedures. Reviews the accuracy of records, exercises decision making authority, and initiates corrective action within established guidelines.*

Ms. Chandler works independently under general supervision and applies her specialized knowledge about leave administration and other technical HR functions to use independent judgment and provide resolution to the administrative of leave and personnel actions for the district colleges' classified employees. Ms. Chandler performs the paraprofessional or technical aspects of human resources, which can then be incorporated into larger human resource functions like compensation, recruitment, or classification. The level, scope, and diversity of Ms. Chandler's assigned duties and responsibilities best fit within the paraprofessional level.

In addition, the duties documented on the Position Description and PQ and described during the Director's review conference are supported by many of the typical work examples identified on the HRCA 2 class specification. The examples similar to Ms. Chandler's assigned duties include the following:

- Interpreting, explaining, and applying human resource rules, policies, regulations or procedures;
- Responding to inquiries and resolving problems in areas such as benefits eligibility or calculations, leave administration, or compensation;
- Reviewing and ensuring the accuracy and completeness of human resource documents such as leave and salary records and employee data forms;
- Analyzing and summarizing data and preparing reports using computerized systems and coordinating the maintenance of computerized human resource information or other recordkeeping systems; verifying accuracy of records and documenting adjustments; maintaining confidential records;
- Conducting training and/or orientation in human resource rules, policies and procedures;
- Recommending changes in procedures or rules to facilitate effectiveness;

- May supervise or direct the work of support staff.

It is evident Ms. Chandler performs her duties in a professional manner, and her work is a very important component of the HR functions across the district. However, in reviewing the totality of her duties and responsibilities, Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2 classification best describes Ms. Chandler's position.

### **Appeal Rights**

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Yvonne Chandler  
Fred Schuneman, SCCD  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits



**YVONNE CHANDLER v SCC**

ALLO-08-071

Exhibit List

**A. Filed by Yvonne Chandler September 30, 2008:**

1. Director's Review Request form signed by Jennifer Mason, WFSE.
2. Job Description, HRCA2, dated December 14, 2007.
3. SCC allocation determination September 12, 2008.
4. Position Questionnaire dated July 2008.
5. Classified Job Opening Template, HRC2

**B. Filed by Seattle Community College December 15, 2008:**

1. Dated and signed Position Review Request
2. Allocation determination letter dated September 12, 2008
3. Dated and signed Job description
4. Classification Specifications used for allocation determination
5. Organizational chart

**C. Filed by WFSE (Yvonne Chandler) December 15, 2008**

1. Classification Specs Human Resource Consultant Assistant 2
2. Classification Specs Human Resource Consultant 2
3. Correspondence numbered 1-49

**D. Human Resource Consultant Class Series Concept**